

50X1-HUM

**Page Denied**

## CONFIDENTIAL

### I RETURN FROM RUSSIA

by Franciszek Bornet

#### Magnitogorsk - a Gigantic Undertaking

I was born in Lyons in 1887, and went to Russia at five years of age with my father, who was an official of the Credit Lyonnais Bank in Odessa. I received my high school education in Switzerland and was graduated from the school of mechanics and electrotechnology in Geneva. I returned to Russia and received my first appointment in 1909 as manager of a railroad depot of a French company in Ruchenkovo near Yuzovka (Stalino of today). My salary was 125 rubles a month, plus a 125 ruble share in profits. The cost of living was low, my expenses were 30 rubles a month. There were no deductions from income - only 3 rubles a year for income tax and 3 rubles a year for a hunting license. One could freely travel all over Russia and cross the boundary. My last visit to France was in 1913. A year later, war broke out. Inasmuch as I was exempt from military service, I did not have to return to my native land. In 1916 I witnessed labor unrest in factories and the first appearance of the Tcheka. In 1922 I had an opportunity to go to France but missed the last train for emigrants. I was finally forced to accept the position of manager of the Sherbinovka metallurgical plant which was part of the large Khenkovo combine. From that time I held various positions and always enjoyed the special privileges of management personnel.

In 1931 I was sent to Magnitogorsk. At that time it was a steppe inhabited by nomads. Inexhaustible deposits of magnetic iron had just been discovered there. Everything had to be built from the start under the most difficult weather conditions - 50 below freezing in winter and 40 degrees in summer, with violent changes in temperature. There were no roads and we lived in portable barracks. About

## CONFIDENTIAL

**CONFIDENTIAL**

2,500 kilometers distant, in Kusnetsk, south of Novosibirsk there were rich deposits of high grade coal. A combine was organized; we sent iron to Kushnietsk and brought coal back to Magnitogorsk.

Among the first workers in Magnitogorsk there were many ordinary criminals sentenced to hard labor, also political prisoners. They worked under the direction of foreign specialists, who worked by contract and were paid in dollars. The workers were poorly fed and were not permitted to drink liquor. The foreigners could buy anything they wanted in stores set up for their exclusive use. The Soviet workers accepted this state of affairs without murmur, since they were taught that they must renounce everything for the good of the population but that foreigners' cooperation was indispensable and it was therefore necessary to give foreigners all that they were accustomed to. Thus, a year after the start, they had a blast furnace, Martin furnaces, and rolling mills in operation. By that time there were 40,000 workers but none of them could bring in their families because of the housing shortage.

In 1932 I left Magnitogorsk of my own free will to work in the Donets Basin. Five years later, I returned to Magnitogorsk as director of the gasworks and found a modern city with asphalt paving, trolleys, and automobiles, the latter for the use of various managers. All the high officials lived in three-story English-style cottages, with basement and kitchen, furnished at plant expense, and gardens. For the upkeep of the gardens, over 100,000 rubles were spent in the year of my return. The workers were a little bit better situated, but there was still a great shortage of housing. The workers lived in three-room dwellings. Officially, one such dwelling unit was assigned to a family, but in practice one unit had to serve three families. They were model apartments with running water, central heating, baths, etc.

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

2,500 kilometers distant, in Kuznetsk, south of Novosibirsk there were rich deposits of high grade coal. A combine was organized; we sent iron to Kuzhnitsk and brought coal back to Magnitogorsk.

Among the first workers in Magnitogorsk there were many ordinary criminals sentenced to hard labor, also political prisoners. They worked under the direction of foreign specialists, who worked by contract and were paid in dollars. The workers were poorly fed and were not permitted to drink liquor. The foreigners could buy anything they wanted in stores set up for their exclusive use. The Soviet workers accepted this state of affairs without murmur, since they were taught that they must renounce everything for the good of the population but that foreigners' cooperation was indispensable and it was therefore necessary to give foreigners all that they were accustomed to. Thus, a year after the start, they had a blast furnace, Martin furnaces, and rolling mills in operation. By that time there were 40,000 workers but none of them could bring in their families because of the housing shortage.

In 1932 I left Magnitogorsk of my own free will to work in the Donets Basin. Five years later, I returned to Magnitogorsk as director of the gasworks and found a modern city with asphalt paving, trolleys, and automobiles, the latter for the use of various managers. All the high officials lived in three-story English-style cottages, with basement and kitchen, furnished at plant expense, and gardens. For the upkeep of the gardens, over 100,000 rubles were spent in the year of my return. The workers were a little bit better situated, but there was still a great shortage of housing. The workers lived in three-room dwellings. Officially, one such dwelling unit was assigned to a family, but in practice one unit had to serve three families. They were model apartments with running water, central heating, baths, etc.

**CONFIDENTIAL**

## CONFIDENTIAL

At the present time, Magnitogorsk is the largest metallurgical center in Russia. It has five blast furnaces and a population of at least 500,000.

### How a Factory, Metallurgical Plant, Mine, etc. Functions in USSR

Whereas my observations date back to 1941, they still hold true today. I have been able to verify the fact that up to October of this year there were no changes except for the increase in pay. However, since the cost of living increased much more, the Soviet worker's standard of living has dropped still lower. The Soviet system owes its existence only to absolute centralization. Private industry does not exist, nor is there any private commerce. Everything belongs to the state. The major part of the agricultural production of kolkhozes and sovkhoses goes to the state. One must acknowledge, however, that centralization is well organized in USSR. With a population that is diligent and has only primitive needs, the Soviet Union has every prerequisite not only for rapid resumption of operations in all the factories destroyed during the war, but also for the satisfactory completion of the Five-Year Plan.

In step with the increase in production, the organization of ministries must also be expanded, since the ministries are the managing centers of industry, agriculture, and food production.

### Trusts

Each of the ministries is a trust. However, the production of each is dependent on the production of the others. For example, the production of the ministry of the heavy machine industry is dependent on other ministries for the delivery of raw materials, fuel, etc. This is where the planning commission enters into the picture. A program of production is worked out for every ministry, setting down the precise quantity of production for the year, quarter, and month. No ministry is permitted to set its own prices but

## CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

follows specific directions from above. Each ministry is subdivided into numerous departments; for example, copper, nickel, tin, lead, etc., under the ministry of non-ferrous metals. Everything is centralized in Moscow. Moscow is the brain. It issues the orders and instructions. The rest execute the orders, precisely and literally, without exception.

### The Communist Cell

Each ministry subdivides the plan according to departments. The latter, in turn, hand it down to the factories, foundries, and mines. When the production plan, along with prices, reaches the factory, it is first discussed in the Communist cell. In this way the vanguard of workers becomes familiar with the details of the program so that at the mass meetings of workers the program can not only be defended and accepted gratefully, but even expanded with counterproposals to increase the quota. The discussion may extend over prolonged and numerous meetings, but the result never varies: the program will be carried out, the quotas may even be increased, and the only permissible objections are those pertaining to the details of execution, the organization of the work in the factory, or the poor functioning of certain divisions. The supply situation is always the object of severe criticism at workers' meetings. Many derogatory remarks are made about the quality of clothing and food provided for the workers. This gives the appearance of great activity on the part of the workers. Criticism provides a safety valve so long as it vents itself on minor officials and does not affect the directives of the ministry.

Criticism of one's own work and that of others is the spur to greater production, but one must apply the proper technique. If anyone wants to cast aspersions at the work of his associates, he must first begin with criticism of his own work. In this way the worker takes the lead and diminishes his own risk.

## CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

Once the annual program is adopted at the workers' meeting (this is always done with enthusiasm, or so it will be noted in the minutes) the administrative work begins. A list must be drawn up for the pertinent department of the ministry enumerating all the required raw materials and estimation of electric power, water, fuel, implements, and machines required. Nothing must be overlooked. Upon receipt of the list, the department applies to other agencies for the required funds. These agencies then study the annual production estimates and notify the department of their decision. Inasmuch as the budget requirements of the department are never approved in full, the department then apportions the materials among the various plants, with appropriate reductions, but with no reduction in the production quota. The responsibility of the management, then, is constantly to devise new ways of improving efficiency and to push economy to the limit. On the whole they usually succeed, because everyone takes an interest in production and prices and hopes to be awarded a premium in the event the production exceeds the quota or the factory makes a further reduction in the costs of production estimated by the ministry.

### War on Waste

Thus we see fitters in Russia working with saws that a French worker would have discarded long before. Others bring old rags from home for cleaning the machines, or bring brooms which they make themselves from branches gathered in the woods. Every worker does whatever he can. Every instance of waste is severely punished. If a worker should be caught taking out a stick of wood or some shavings to start a fire at home, he would get at least a year in prison. The law is exceptionally severe as it relates to petty thefts in the factory. Should a worker forget to return a nail to its box, he could be prosecuted if the nail were found in his pocket. Likewise, lateness is no joking matter and is punishable with imprisonment.

## CONFIDENTIAL

**CONFIDENTIAL**

I knew a woman who was sentenced to a year in prison for being 15 minutes late twice. She was the mother of an infant three months old. The child was sent to a nursery and the mother to prison. Alongside the paragraph on every citizen's right to work, the constitution contains a paragraph stressing every citizen's duty to work. The effects of these paragraphs are far-reaching.

Selection of the Sacrificial Goat

As soon as the work program is adopted, it is put into practice. Theoretically, the managing director of the plant need not be a Communist, although I have never known a director who was not a member of the party. His assistants are the technical manager and the chief engineer. They are responsible to the trust and their respective departments but they do not run the factory alone. Reports published in the press informing Stalin of the activation of a new plant or division are always signed by the managing director, the secretary of the Communist cell, and the secretary of the labor union, all sharing responsibility for conditions at the plant. The managing director and both secretaries are called upon to submit reports at Communist meetings in the area or region on the progress of the work at the plant. They must also submit reports to the secretary of the party for the given region or province.

The chief leaders of the province, an area often exceeding France in size, have assistant secretaries for every major branch of the industry, who receive daily reports from the factories.

Five-Minute Meetings

The slightest shortcoming is immediately detected, since the provincial committees have a large auditing personnel. Production is traced daily and the assistant secretaries make frequent check-up visits to the plant. The managers frequently appeal to the regional secretaries for aid if, for example, there are not enough railroad cars available to transport the goods, or if coal has not been

**CONFIDENTIAL**

## CONFIDENTIAL

received through the fault of the railroads or mines. At the plant there are frequent meetings of the workers and technicians. These are so-called "five-minute meetings" which may last for hours. They are called at the completion of each eight-hour shift to determine how the work has progressed, what has been produced, and what should be done about the lazy workers.

It is amazing to see workers, tired out at the end of the day's work, take such a lively part in the discussion that the manager of the crew has to adjourn the meeting before all the speakers can be heard. The manager invariably concludes the meeting with the words: "Starting tomorrow we must roll up our sleeves and do better work." These five-minute meetings place responsibility only on the brigades.

### Mass Tribunal

Mass meetings of all workers and the entire personnel take on a different aspect, especially if the plant for some reason has failed to fulfill the plan. This means trouble. The best speakers will address the group and the uppermost question in everyone's mind is who will be the victim. Naturally, there must have been gold-bricking or sabotage. No one is at ease or knows what he will be called upon to do. The managing director, secretary of the party, and secretary of the trade union have held a meeting on the previous day, have prepared the agenda, and have agreed on the choice of victims. After the report of the managing director, who has submitted figures on production and prices, and, as usual, has complained about supplies and deliveries, the following words are always spoken: "Comrades, this does not justify poor work. Our work would undoubtedly be better if we did not have among us workers who still fail to understand their responsibility to the state, party, and our combine. They are slowing down the Stakhanovite system and demoralizing the personnel with their ill will." The managing director assumes a severe facial expression and says the following: "The managing

## CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

director is right but he has not told the whole truth. He has not given the names of those who have disorganized the factory and have sabotaged our efforts. It is my responsibility, as member of our dear Communist Party, to proclaim officially the names of the saboteurs."

Then the charges begin. During the speech of the managing director, the secretary of the trade union looks excited, takes a notebook from his pocket, makes notes, and gives the impression that his reply will be severe. "Comrades, if the charges of the manager are justified, they are charges against me. I must admit that I did not show proper vigilance. But you know how it is, comrades. I work day and night and my duties are very demanding. I failed to keep our members on the proper moral plane, but one cannot see everything and do everything. Put yourselves in my place. It is my duty to defend my associates. They are to blame, but I appeal to your feeling of comradeship. I am convinced that those who have been charged will do everything in their power to redeem themselves and in the near future we will find them among the Stakhanovites."

The secretary of the party will lament what has taken place and will threaten the saboteurs with the most severe punishment. The managing director again takes the floor to sum up the discussion. He promises to take the excuses of the trade union secretary under consideration. He will pardon the delinquents this time, but this is the last warning. If such instances happen again, the guilty will be brought to trial.

The motion is carried by a show of hands and the meeting is adjourned. These meetings are held once or twice a month and one always hears the same phrases.

### Employment Record Books

Anyone who is not a member of a trade union, which is a very rare occurrence, enjoys very few of the ordinary privileges. His pay will be small and he will be given employment only after union members.

## CONFIDENTIAL

**CONFIDENTIAL**

Every worker must have a book in which are noted the starting date of employment at a plant, date of separation, and the type of work. The book is kept in the files of the plant and is returned to the worker when he leaves, since without it he could not get employment anywhere. When accepting a job, the worker must fill out a detailed questionnaire giving information not only about education and experience, but also details about military service and his parents. This questionnaire is retained in the factory until another establishment requests it, in the event that the worker changes his employment. Thus a questionnaire, with annotated comments on conduct and work, travels from one establishment to another. The comments are not disclosed to the worker, but the director is well informed. Up to 1944 a worker did not have the right to quit a factory without the director's permission.

**Handling of Disputes**

All disputes are handled by a special commission consisting of the representatives of the director and of the labor union. The worker can make no appeal on the established quota or wage rate. Sometimes, however, there may be a mistake in calculating a quota and if the worker becomes aware of this he may file a complaint. Such complaints are referred to the commission. The trade unions have nothing to say about wage rates; these are established by ministerial decrees after drawing up collective contracts. There is no possibility of large-scale adjustments because there are no strikes. A strike would be against the state, but the state and the workers are one and the same thing.

At present, wages are not sufficient to cover minimum subsistence. Only the government can raise wages, when it regards such action appropriate. Wages are never discussed at workers' meetings, only production and efficiency. When prices of consumers' goods rise, wage rates are increased some time later, but never enough to cover

**CONFIDENTIAL**

## CONFIDENTIAL

the increase in the cost of living. However, thanks are voiced enthusiastically at the workers' meetings.

### My Day as Manager

When I held the position of chief of the gas division in Magnitogorsk, I had a suburban home, a maid, a horse and carriage, and a coachman - all prerogatives of a manager of an important division of the industrial machine. I was subordinate to the managing director, not to mention the trade unions and the Communist Party.

My manner of living was typical for every technician in the USSR. I awoke at 5:30. The maid prepares breakfast and at 6:00 the coach is ready to take me to the plant 3 kilometers away. Before leaving the house, I receive a telephone call from one of my four engineers, who, in turn, will telephone the managing director and the secretary of the party and will then attend the five-minute meeting following the night shift.

At 7:00 I arrive at the plant and make an inspection tour. The night shift has hurried home to sleep and, taking advantage of the darkness, has left the floors unswept. The new shift is unwilling to do the work. I have to raise my voice and make threatening remarks.

After the five-minute meeting, the service engineer submits a detailed report. He receives the daily ration of soup, it is his duty to see that the premises are kept clean, and he should not have permitted the workers to leave before putting everything in order. More discussion and more threats. There is some talk of depriving the engineer of his monthly premium.

### Economy the Order of the Day

At 8:00 I go to my office. The executives are already there and my desk is piled high with supply requisitions to be signed. Without my signature, the supply clerk will not give out one nail. I am responsible for the thrifty management of my division. I peel off

## CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

one requisition after another and call in the electrotechnician and engineers to justify the quantities requested. Each of my subordinates must report to me the minutest details of the work done during the night and receive my instructions for the day. Then I make an inspection of the work being done.

### After a Good Day's Work

Each section foreman, before leaving the plant, must write a daily report of the work in his section. The chiefs of the electro-technical and machine shop divisions must do the same. They must submit their suggestions on ways to streamline the work and cut costs. They will also name the poor workers and demand suitable punishment. This involves dozens of reports for the chief of a large division. He must do all these things with great care, since there is a tendency for everyone to pass the responsibility to the chief. Usually, however, the chiefs of large staffs have secretaries. The chiefs make marginal comments on the reports submitted to them and then sign the collated report which the secretary draws up on the basis of the comments.

At around 11:00 reports arrive from the board of directors, which show which of our associate managers is not doing so well and what corrective steps have been taken. These reports also contain general directives for all the divisions.

In the afternoon I have more free time and begin an orderly tour of inspection to see that all the orders have been carried out. One must never praise anyone but must always be dissatisfied.

At around 1400 there is a change of shifts. The workers know that I am at the plant and do everything to leave their places in order. I go to the five-minute meeting, which lasts an hour because I have to listen to all the workers' complaints and answer questions. My coach arrives at 1500 to take me home to dinner. After dinner I take a nap for an hour, but this is frequently interrupted by a telephone call. At 1800 I return to the factory for the third inspection.

## CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

If everything is in order, I am home at 2000 or 2100. At 2200 I receive from my assistant, the service engineer, and can then think about going to bed.

### There Are Few Quiet Evenings

Unfortunately, quiet evenings are rare. The managing director frequently calls a meeting of technicians at 2000 or 2100, and then I return home at midnight. I must also call meetings of technicians under my jurisdiction to inform them about decisions of the directors, and there is no way of doing this during the working day. It is also necessary to take part in discussions of major plans such as the five-year plan and collective contracts, and to attend meetings of the commission governing disputes with workers. All these things take place in the evenings.

### One Must Try to Avoid Responsibility

I have under me an assistant director, two German consultant engineers, four young Russian engineers, the manager of the machine shop division, the electrotechnical manager, the head foreman, a foreman for each 8-hour shift, and the manager of the gas service division, also a German, with seven foremen under him.

In the offices there are large bookkeeping, statistical, planning, personnel, and workers' security staffs. Such abundance of administrative personnel would be astonishing to industrialists in the west, where one manager is generally appointed to head an enterprise. It is not so in Russia. Wherever the state takes over the administrative functions, the worker's constant and foremost preoccupation is to pass responsibility on to someone else.

### The Life of a Russian Worker

The following is a brief description of the working day of a worker who lives in the country and works in the railroad car repair shops in Sverdlovsk.

## CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

This worker gets up at 500 and puts a piece of bread and a half-liter bottle of milk into a bag (if he is fortunate enough to have a cow). Then he goes to the railroad stop. There is no station, just a platform of wooden planks put up in the winter when the temperature is 40-50 degrees below freezing. Everyone prefers to come early and wait since there is a penalty for every lateness at the factory. The cars are overflowing. The workers usually sleep on the way or smoke in silence, since Russians respect the sleep of their fellow-men. After leaving the train, the worker has about 6 kilometers more to the plant. It is exceedingly difficult to board a trolley. The crush in French subways is nothing compared to the overcrowding in Russian trolleys.

The worker finally arrives to work, tired even before he begins. After the workday ends, there is a five-minute meeting. The worker is fortunate who lives outside the city because he can excuse himself to catch a train and leave earlier. On the other hand, he has to put up with the inconvenience of travel. The trains leave late and if he lives 60 kilometers from the factory, he will need about three hours for travel and will get home about 2200 in the evening. Such a worker has his own little house, which is not confiscated, he has a small garden, a few chickens, a cow, and sometimes even a pig. The worker who lives in the city, on the other hand, has to attend all the meetings, and there are many of them. Stalin makes a speech; it must be commented on at the meetings, sentence by sentence, word by word. If the speech is long, it will be discussed over a series of meetings.

It is a matter of general principle that the worker should have no free time which he does not use for self-education, or for taking an interest in the collective work of the plant or political affairs of the nation. Therefore, the secretary of the trade union also calls meetings. The secretary of the party calls meetings at least once a

## CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

week, and the secretary of Communist youth does the same. The motion picture club exhibits propaganda films; the rest is left to the press.

### Clubs

On the whole, well-organized and well-staffed clubs are the favorite meeting places for city workers, who spend the major portion of their days of rest there. These institutions have auditoriums, with seating capacity up to 1,000, attractive decorations, and excellent programs. They are frequently visited by the large public theatrical groups. The members of the club organize their own amateur theaters. The clubs also have gymnasiums and physical culture stadiums for the preparation of young people for military service.

The large Moscow theaters, which charge 30-50 rubles admission, are not within reach of the workers. Admission to movies is cheaper, 3 rubles, and in clubs 1 ruble. In spite of the moderate prices, they get stiff competition from saloons and beer joints. Many workers exhausted from work prefer alcohol to movies.

### Paid Vacations

After 11 months' work in one plant, a worker is entitled to a vacation, or the equivalent in money if he is unable or prefers not to take a vacation. The minimum vacation is two weeks a year but in practice varies according to working conditions. For instance, in mines or in metallurgical plants, where heat, fumes, or dampness produce greater exhaustion, the yearly vacation period may be extended to three or four weeks, as stipulated in agreements between trade unions and trusts or ministries. Each worker spends his vacation as he wishes, but if his physical condition warrants, he may gain admittance to a sanatorium. So-called sanatoriums in Russia are rarely institutions for the care of extended illness. Sanatoriums are simply rest homes. Theoretically, a worker is supposed to pay for his maintenance in a sanatorium and pay his travelling expenses, but trade unions may give relief to those who have heavy family

## CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

responsibilities. However, it is impossible for a worker to spend a vacation in such an institution together with his family. It is not likely for the wife to be in the same physical condition as the husband and to be assigned a vacation at the same time. A vacation trip would be unthinkable as it would be ruinous.

In 1941 a month's stay at a sanatorium cost 900-1,200 rubles and 500-600 at a rest home. Every trade union has its own institution, reserved for its own members. There everyone gets the same treatment, regardless of his position. There are also institutions with grander accommodations and better food reserved for higher officials of the state, army, and NKVD. Artists, writers, and professors also have their own rest homes, usually better equipped.

Everyone at the rest home must follow prescribed rules. He must not rise before 700 or retire later than 2200 or 2300. There are four substantial meals a day. It is not unusual to gain 10 kilograms in weight during a 2-weeks' stay. This is not strange since after 11 1/2 months' work a worker arrives exhausted and poorly nourished. While on vacation, he gets cocoa, butter, roast meat, milk and cream, but no whiskey or beer. However, there are still too few rest homes, although there are more of them every year.

### How to Obtain a Food Ration Card

Properly speaking, there is no black market in Russia. However, as mentioned before, there is a free market, run by the government, where anything may be purchased at unheard-of high prices. No worker can afford to buy at these prices except in unusual instances, but must have a food ration card. 24 hours upon arrival at a given locality, he reports to the office of the militia with his passport and a form signed by the housing committee, certifying the amount of space in the occupied dwelling (at least 6 square meters per person). The form also states the name of the place from which he came, the reason for the change of position, number of the passport, nationality, etc.

## CONFIDENTIAL

**CONFIDENTIAL**

After a long wait, he returns to the residence, obtains a tenant's book, buys a special stamp, and reports to the passport office. More waiting. The next day an entry is made in the tenant's book and on the passport showing the length of time that one is permitted to stay in the given locality. No one is permitted to take a tenant without permission from the militia. Any infraction of this law carries the penalty of a large fine or imprisonment. Besides, the housing committees would immediately report such a case, as NKVD inspectors constantly check on the lists of tenants and watch how they live.

One can only obtain a food ration card if one is working. The personnel office of the plant issues a card according to the position of the worker. A salaried employee is allowed fewer commodities than a wage-earner, but artists, professors, and other salaried workers receive additional benefits. If the wife does not work, she is entitled to a food ration card as the worker's dependent, likewise other members of the family, if they are unable to work. Those who have no employment, as well as their families, are not entitled to anything.

Passports are mandatory for all Soviet citizens.

**Sverdlovsk and the Soviet Arsenal**

The huge effort of the Soviet Union in exploiting the mining resources of the Urals and Siberia was amply rewarded during the last war. What would have become of the USSR, if it had not been for the Donets Basin, if the Soviet Union had not created huge enterprises in the Urals and beyond the Urals, often in the stark wilderness - modern enterprises, superbly thought out, furnished preponderantly with American and German equipment, with a highly skilled technical personnel, and with workers that were diligent and made few demands?

The USSR prepared its cadres well, so that in the end it could get along without foreign specialists. The enterprises were in a

**CONFIDENTIAL**

## CONFIDENTIAL

position to produce by themselves all the machine parts needed for heavy industry. The entire effort was focused on the processing of ferrous and non-ferrous metals and on the development of the mines. Furthermore, the exploitation of oil wells was begun in Bashkir; today it is a second Baku. The nickel mines Orsk and Kuchegorsk in Karelia; Urala and Icy nickel mines in the Urals, and the Kapcheranga, Onon, Olovianaya, and Ryder tin mines were raised to the maximum efficiency. There were regularly functioning plants even in the far-distant places of the Yakutia land. Copper works in Balkash and Sredno-Uralnsk are now plants of the metallurgical industry. The new aluminum factory in the Urals, and the metallurgical plants and blast furnaces in Magnitogorsk, Kuznetsk, and Tagil are reporting constantly higher productivity. Conditions for the production of war materials, aircraft, and tanks sprang up with speed that is beyond comprehension. By way of example, I will give an account of Sverdlovsk, formerly Ekaterinburg, where the royal family perished.

### Factories in the Heart of the Wilderness

We cross the Urals. The railroad line circles the mountains and runs along the valleys. We pass Ufa, the capital of Bashkir, where there is a large internal combustion engine plant, then Zlatoust, a steel production center. At first, a traveler cannot detect plants with their enormous electric furnaces and workshops. These are hidden in the mountains and in countless small valleys. Later, he notices the switchman's house and the single railroad track that branches off the main line and disappears into the woods and into the unknown. These are the only indications of the great productive capacity close by.

The USSR, which in 1937 needed foreign specialists to build large metallurgical plants and to train young cadres, did, however, know how to get along without foreign aid when it was a question of

## CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

secret factories. Starting with 1937, every means was applied to eliminate non-Russian elements as far as possible in all branches of industry.

On the way to Sverdlovsk, we pass Molotov with its well-known factories, and Kungur, famous for its crane and excavator plants.

The branch line from Kuzino leads to a large fire-brickyard and to Sredno-Uralsk, the center of the copper industry and copper mining. Chropik has a chrome foundry and can satisfy not only domestic requirements but can also export large quantities abroad. One kilometer farther is Novotrubnyi, the Mannesmann cylinder plant. Farther in the woods are the titanomagnetite mines. The next station is Krustalnaya, a rock crystal quarry supplying the optical instrument industry.

The next station is Vershyna, on the boundary between Europe and Asia. Then the train enters the railroad junction of Sverdlovsk, where the lines of Perm (Molotov), Kazan, Nizhniy Tagil-Solikamsk cross. We pass the machine-gun factory in Nemyansk. Finally we reach the suburb of Sverdlovsk. To the right is a lake 10 kilometers long and 2 kilometers wide, an electric power station, and then the VIZ plant which produces special iron plates for generators and electric motors. Beyond that are the large brick buildings of the state storage warehouses.

The railroad station in Sverdlovsk is modern and impressive. Across is the railroad officials' club. Further on is a low building where the royal family died, later turned into a museum named in honor of Sverdlov, the late president of the executive committee of the party, after whom the city also was named. There are a few pictures, books, and other printed matter in the museum, concerning the life of Sverdlov.

Through the center of the city is a long, broad avenue called Lenin Street, lined with modern buildings. Further on is the lyric

## CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

theater, the dramatic theater, large stores, and motion pictures. The Greek cathedral on the main square was demolished and in its place huge reviewing stands were built of cut stone. Officials occupy this place for 1 May and 7 November parades.

The sight of the new university section is truly striking, with the buildings of the Industrial Institute, student dormitories, and faculty buildings. The tall, old trees have been preserved and lawns surround everything. Sverdlovsk also contains the Graduate School of Mining, and institutes of chemistry, medicine, agriculture, and foreign languages, graduate military schools, hospitals, clinics, vocational schools, and numerous primary schools.

### Watch-Towers of the Guard

The great industry, however, is beyond the city. When we take the train running along the highway leading to the heavy machine factories of the Urals, the first stop is the oxygen factory. The second stop is a machine and tool factory which produces Soviet machines copied from foreign models. The following method is used: three machines of the same identical model are bought, then the work begins. The first machine is installed and put into operation. The second machine is dismantled and drawings are made of each of the parts. The third machine is tested in the chemical laboratory, with analysis of the metal, and tests of tensile strength and resistance. Later, a few minor details are changed, the machine is given a Soviet factory trade-mark, and goes into serial production.

At the third station there is a branch line which goes through the woods. After about a kilometer's ride, one suddenly sees the huge buildings of the Ural plant manufacturing steam turbines, electric apparatus, and transformers. A new workers' city springs up out of the forest. The train crosses the line which connects the heavy machine factory with Monetnaya with its inexhaustible deposits of peat, which provide the fuel. The new development, Uralmash, is

## CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

well built up with modern structures. All the factories and plants, over an area of many square kilometers, are surrounded with high fencing topped with several rows of barbed wire. Guards stand at the watch towers armed with automatic rifles. Entry into the plant is a complete impossibility. One must have a special pass even to go to the offices. It is necessary to leave the portfolio with the doorman, and go in and come out empty handed.

### Establishments No 2

There are a great many divisions in these enormous enterprises. Hundreds of draughtsmen, engineers, and inventors work in the large well-lighted halls, equipped with the most modern facilities. The most powerful rolling mills, grist-mills, excavators, movable bridges, all the heavy machines for the construction of metallurgical plants come from Uralmash.

If, on the way to the offices, one should turn into the wrong corridor by mistake, he would be stopped by a guard immediately. His pass would be verified and he would be lead back to the proper section.

There are only a few sworn workers in Plant No 2. No one who values "freedom" would ask them any questions. People in Europe who say they have "freely" traveled thousands of kilometers over the USSR have seen only what they have been permitted to see, or, rather, very little. Europeans have not the slightest conception of these secret cities in the Urals and in Siberia, whose production potential grows day by day.

### Life in the Kolkhoze

The peasants in the USSR usually live in two-room huts. They have retained these small huts as their own private property. In the old days, in the villages there were wealthy villagers, "kulaks," traders, owners of rather large homes, sometimes built of brick or stone with red or green roofing. These were dispossessed during the

## CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

revolution, and their property was confiscated by the state like the churches and parishes. The buildings confiscated were assigned to the administrative personnel, the police, and the Communist party, all together employing substantially large staffs. Could the totalitarian system exist without this impressive administrative machine? Thus the village became a kolkhoze.

### The end of the "Kulaks"

A kolkhoze is a factory for agricultural commodities and the members are the workers. The kolkhoze owns the land and machinery and assigns jobs to the workers in a manner to insure the greatest efficiency.

The creation of kolkhozes was not a minor undertaking. Generally, it is difficult to convince the farmer of the necessity of collectivizing land, stock, machinery, and other utilities. Everyone wants to keep his own property. However, tsarist Russia presented a less difficult problem, being a land where some property owners had millions of hectares while the peasants did not own even one. The owners of farms who enjoyed some prosperity did not want kolkhozes and became a class known as "kulaks." Thus they had to share the fate of the great landlords. Moscow issued directives aimed at the destruction of the kulaks as enemies of the regime. Some of the small parcel holders also found it convenient to help liquidate this class. After they were wiped out the systematic exploitation of farm workers gradually began.

### Complicated Mechanism

Every kolkhoze has a president elected by the members of the collective. Usually his assistant is a professional agronomist. The president is in charge of the bookkeeping department jointly with checkers who compute the amount of work performed by the brigades and individual workers. This checking is quite complicated and must be done conscientiously so as not to hurt the workers and

## CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

at the same time so as not to result in losses to the collective. Otherwise, the checker risks severe penalties. For this reason, thefts, if any, are very small.

Kolkhozes do not usually have machines for working large tracts but rent these from the tractor and farm machine stations. These stations are well equipped and have repair shops and skilled personnel. They handle the plowing and sowing, and assist in harvesting. They receive payment in cash, plus a share of the harvest. Under this system, the prosperous farmers do not help their poorer neighbors, but, rather, the state gives necessary aid. Workers in the kolkhozes are remunerated for the number of days worked in the year. There are fewer idlers here than in the factories. Harvests are the result of work, and before the worker is paid, he must: (1) harvest the grain; (2) deliver the share of grain due the state; (3) deposit the grain in the granaries; (4) store potatoes and other vegetables; (5) deliver to the state its due share of meat and milk; (6) set aside grain for sowing and for "reserves." When all these things have been done, the remainder goes to the worker. It is obvious that the slightest decrease in the collective harvest infringes immediately on the most primitive needs of all.

Nor is this all. The kolkhozes not only render to the state not only what is officially required, but often give much more. Party speakers travel through the villages and hold meetings for the purpose of instigating "spontaneous" resolutions to make further voluntary contributions to the state out of the collective's share. Just let a collective refuse.

What remains of the harvest is divided by the total number of hours worked and each member receives a share proportionate to his contribution of work. Part of the payment is in cash, since the kolkhozes sell part of the harvest either to the state or in its

## CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

own market. After deductions for taxes and costs of administration, the total cash is also distributed according to the time worked.

### Poverty or Prosperity

The well-organized kolkhozes are prosperous. They have clubs, schools, new stores, hospitals, and fruit orchards. The collectives are worth millions, which gives rise to the conviction that collective farming, despite the high taxes, promotes the welfare of the farm worker, who has the added advantages over the factory worker in that he owns his home, garden, and livestock. When I lived in the neighborhood of Samonvet, in the Urals, I had the opportunity of confirming the comparative prosperity of the kolkhozes in that locality. The houses had electricity, many even had a radio. Each farmer had a cow, one or two pigs, chickens, and geese. The food was simple but adequate. One could purchase at the stores, without a ration card, sugar, pastry, tea, coffee, chocolate, Russian "champagne," clothing, and linens.

There are, however, many poor kolkhozes, whose members live in misery. The system everywhere is severe and harsh, but the causes of prosperity or poverty lie in the local conditions of work.

### The Individual Versus the State

Only civil marriages are recognized in the Soviet Union. These are registered at the Registry like births and deaths. The couple applies at the Registry with birth certificates and passports, accompanied by two witnesses. The ceremony takes place immediately. This may be followed up by a church ceremony, but the latter has no legal validity.

Immediately after the revolution, divorces were easy to obtain. The cost of the first divorce was 50 rubles, of the second 500, on a progressive scale. Divorces now are harder to obtain. Not only must both sides agree to the divorce, but one side must prove that the other failed in the performance of marital duties, or made

## CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

married life impossible. Furthermore, the judge may be expected to attempt a reconciliation.

For a time abortions were permissible, but the law has been modified. The new regulations provide for the most severe penalties for abortions undertaken without the permission of a special medical commission. The state pays high premiums to large families and donates complete layettes for newborn babies. Mothers of large families receive the citation of the Heroic Mother. There are nurseries everywhere for the care of infants of working mothers, and shelters for children of kindergarten age. The care is good and the fees are deducted from the worker's pay. As a matter of principle, mothers of small children are not supposed to work at night.

These are all matters pertaining to the private life of citizens. As for public life, the basis of Soviet administration are the Councils. Lenin's idea in creating the system appeared to be simply this: put the knout in the people's hands and let them beat one another in the name of freedom. The councils extend from top to bottom everywhere: the village council, the city council, the regional council, the district council of the autonomous republic, up to the Supreme Council of the USSR. The latter establishes the laws, the others carry them out.

Hence we have councils and cells.

We have the communist cell in the village, and an array of cells in the city and district. In the same manner, there are cells in the factories, bureaus, trade unions, and large stores, and further on, cells of the region, province, autonomous republics, and "independent" states, a network of eyes serving the leadership of the Communist Party of the USSR.

## CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

There is no room for a second party. Those who are not Communists or do not belong to Communist Youth, are without representation and can form no opposition. Non-members may occasionally be elected to a council but their appointment must be arranged and confirmed by the party. The Ministry of the Interior is organized in the same manner and, with a veritable army of informers, penetrates into the farthestmost and smallest places, for nothing must escape the vigilance of the party leaders and Politburo.

### Judges. Indeed

The Ministry of Justice has courts of peace and tribunals which try cases in the open and admit lawyers for the defense, but this whole apparatus is superfluous. If anyone is suspected of unorthodox political views, he simply disappears, and only much later, in prison or in a concentration camp, he learns that he has been sentenced to 8, 10, or 15 years' imprisonment for subversive propaganda or activities. He has been convicted under paragraph 58. Nor is his family notified. He may even be shot according to the same routine. There have, indeed, been large political trials, but these have been arranged merely to strike at groups within the party through the leaders brought to trial, and thus reveal deviations from the opinions of Stalin. These were purely propaganda trials. Furthermore, those on trial were too prominent to disappear en masse without a trial. It is another matter if some little Ivanov, who is not known outside of his own village, has a big mouth. He vanishes quietly and is soon forgotten; it would be dangerous, even for his closest relatives, to show that they think of him.

The councils are elected by the people - the democratic system - but the party sees to it that there is no deviation.

I recall the elections to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR when I lived in Palkino. "It is the duty of every citizen to vote. We must show the whole world that the entire bloc of the Communist party

## CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

and non-party members voted as one man for candidates in whom we can place full confidence." This is the way the party speaker prepared the voters, giving an account of the life and qualifications of the one and only candidate for the region. "If anyone has any objections, let him speak out; we can say anything here. But I am sure that no one has anything against our comrade. He is upright, well known, and has been thoroughly investigated."

No one in this locality knew the candidate, who was an engineer at the Sverdlovsk heavy machine plants. This was of no consequence. His candidacy was supported by the party speakers. Discussion was superfluous; he was nominated from above.

At last the great day arrived. Even before dawn the voters lined up at the polls. There was a buffet at the polling booth, with all kinds of delicacies, even butter. Automobiles were sent after the women voters, even when they had no more than 300 meters' travel. The next day the world was informed that 99 percent of the voters cast their votes.

### Two Pillars of the Soviet Union: the Informer and the Prison

The horde of informers planted throughout the entire area of the Soviet Union, is unknown but powerful. These are not official agents of the NKVD. In certain cases they are reimbursed for their expenses, if they can justify them on the grounds that they are necessary to obtain required information. However, they receive no steady remuneration. They use pseudonyms in signing their reports and can be identified only by the chiefs of their divisions. Such an agent selects a pseudonym when entering the service and simultaneously receives a serial number. The official papers of the informant contain a facsimile of his signature.

### Recruiting

There were instances when I wanted to release a worker that was not suited to the job and met with unexplained opposition. The

## CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

trade union and the party were in agreement with me, but somehow there was always some interference with carrying out my orders. The reason was simply that poor workers happen to be valuable informers. They are to be found everywhere, among party and trade union secretaries, and even among officials of the NKVD.

The recruitment of an informer often takes place in the following manner. Late one evening, a civilian, with whom one is or is not acquainted, visits the residence and wishes to talk to the head of the family. In the course of the conversation, the head learns that the Economic Bureau has obtained information that there have been large expenditures, or purchases at the store or restaurant, or that there had been a party at the house with much drinking, and that, naturally, the Bureau is wondering where the comrade got the money. On other occasions, it is suggested that there have been reports of conversations criticising the regime at the comrade's residence and the comrade must realize that if the matter were to be carried further, there might be serious consequences to him and to his family. However, they are taking into consideration various services which he has rendered and they are counting on other services in the future. The visitor is merely a friend warning the comrade against falling into a trap.

Naturally, the head of the house thanks the courteous visitor. However, the visitor returns repeatedly until he finally gets the victim to sign up as an informer.

Sometimes the recruiting agent approaches a servant, or even the wife, and gives her the impression that she is rendering a great service and is warding off suspicion against the family. Many women are informers and in this way the NKVD knows the intimate details of family life.

### Every New City is First a Labor Camp

The prisoners of the NKVD, which superseded the GPU and Tcheka, are just as valuable to the regime as the informers. It seems strange

## CONFIDENTIAL

**CONFIDENTIAL**

that in the huge industrial centers there are not only modern factories, but also obsolete plants worked at a feverish pace. This is explained by the fact that for many years the USSR will need every pound of metal which it can produce, whereas its incomprehensibly vast manpower reserves compensate for the use of old material. The prisoners maintain manpower reserves at a high level. In the initial stages, every city and every plant is a concentration camp of the NKVD.

It happens in this way. The geologists discover new deposits. The Council of Commissars decides to exploit the area, but the territory is a wilderness. There are no roads and no inhabited areas for hundreds of kilometers. The climate is bad, and it is out of the question to recruit enough volunteers to colonize the land. Transports of prisoners will serve the purpose. The NKVD has a supply of both laborers and specialists, since article 58 applies to all classes of society.

The prisoners travel the long route on foot, in stages, through the tundras and virgin forests of Siberia and the far north, carrying a few primitive tools, tents, and food. One also meets them in the deserts of the south.

**Years Later**

After arriving at the destination, the expedition begins to build a camp to serve as barracks and prison. In the north, the work proceeds rapidly; the timber is cut and the barracks are made of logs. In the south, huts are made of sun-dried clay. If no wood is available, doors, windows and floors present enormous difficulties. The people must sleep on the ground for a long time. Slowly, supplies of lumber are received and the camp becomes fit for habitation. Then the preparatory labor begins to make ready for the arrival of ordinary workers. The prisoners clear the ground and do the spade work for the sewage and water systems. If necessary, they build dams and trace the routes of future railroad lines. Often such preparatory work takes

**CONFIDENTIAL**

## CONFIDENTIAL

years, and only after the arrival of ordinary workers does the world learn of the existence of the locality. Sometimes the newspapers publish lists of names of "involuntary" laborers of the NKVD, who have been awarded honorary distinctions for their heroic work. Recently Izvestiya devoted a half column to the names of prisoners of NKVD cited for the building of a canal from the Volga to Moscow and the canal to the White Sea. These are proofs of the "organizing ability" of the institution.

### Premiums

"A human being is the most valuable thing we possess," said Stalin. The NKVD takes inspiration from these words, for we must admit that while forced labor is hard, nevertheless, as far as possible, the NKVD feeds the prisoners accordingly; that is, just enough so that prisoners will not starve to death before the expiration of the prison term. Every human being is useful in colonization. At the camp there is always a hospital, medical service, and a club where the politicians keep the prisoners informed about economic life in the nation.

Work competition, with premium awards in the form of a supplementary food allowance, or the hope of obtaining freedom before serving a full term, ensure enthusiasm in the work done. After a time, the camp is moved and the turrets of the guard are erected elsewhere.

Thus, the so-called GULAG, the Central Office of Camps of the NKVD, cannot meet the demand for manpower, even though such a worker is quite expensive in view of the high costs of administration and supervision.

### The Death of Pussey

On 15 July 1941 when the Vichy Government broke off diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, as I found out later, I was arrested and sent to a camp in Novosibirsk, where I found about twenty of my countrymen. After a year of monotonous existence, during which even

## CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

my family knew nothing of my fate, we were transferred to the famous Camp No 89 in Spanskogozavod, near Karaganda, in Kazakhstan.

Living conditions were deplorable. Dysentery and freezing cold decimated the internees. The last Frenchman whose death we mourned died 12 August 1946. His name was Piotr Pussey.

### A Worker's Dream

A carpenter by trade, and a member of the Communist Party, Pussey had worked in the car division of Renault in Billancourt. His wife, whom he met in Paris at a Communist meeting, was born in Odessa. They felt that living conditions in France were intolerable and their minds wandered to the USSR which they had heard praised so often. There, they were convinced, a worker would be assured of the kind of existence which he deserved. A visit to the Soviet pavilion at a fair in 1937 aroused their enthusiasm. "Our son will become an engineer in the Soviet Union," cried Pussey, and their departure was agreed upon.

All three boarded a Soviet ship at Marseilles as steerage passengers, but what of such minor inconvenience? They arrived at Odessa full of hope. Pussey expected special consideration as a militant communist, and sent his party membership card to the Comintern in Moscow.

Unfortunately, the days went by and they had to face reality. Suitable work could not be had and their meager savings were almost exhausted.

### His Disillusionment

The family moved from Odessa to Darnitsa near Kiev. There Pussey finally obtained work in a railroad car repair shop. But what a difference between actual conditions and the "prosperity" which they had expected! Not only were the work quotas considerably higher than the French, but it was necessary to use inferior tools. The inadequate remuneration soon forced Pussey's wife to give sewing lessons in

## CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

the workers' club. Even this was not enough, and if they had not had a pair of goats, they would have had to go hungry. The story of their miserable existence would be the story of the average worker in Russia.

### Victim of Forced Labor

In July 1941, Pussey shared the fate of his countrymen. He was sent to the Oranki prison together with his family. Shortly thereafter, the NKVD freed his wife and son, regarding them as Soviet citizens, and transferred Pussey to our camp. He tried many times to find out what became of his family but never received a reply. In 1945 Pussey was assigned to a Cossack kolkhoze. This was very strenuous work so that in December 1945 Pussey returned to camp seriously ill. He was admitted to the hospital and died there three weeks before our liberation.

### Pussey's Last Will

I visited him a few days before he died. "Today or tomorrow I shall die. If you return to France, visit my brother who lives in Arnouville-Les-Genessee near Paris and tell him what life is like in this country. I regret I shall never return to France. I would not be afraid to say what I saw here and how much I suffered."

### No Coffin and a Common Grave

There were five of us Frenchmen at Pussey's death. As the stretcher was carried out of the hospital, I lifted the cover and pinned on a tiny tricolor, made of odds and ends. We were only allowed to go as far as the gate. Nor had they allowed us to nail some old boards together for a coffin. Like all the others, Pussey's body was thrown into a common grave.

On 6 September 1946 we were informed that we were free. We had every reason to believe that we owed our freedom only to the fact that the French Embassy in Moscow had received one of the letters which we had managed to send through secret channels. Now the NKVD reported that our release had been signed in April.

## CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

At any rate, the attitude of the authorities toward us changed radically. They even asked if we realized with what care they had looked after our health. After a short stay in Karaganda, we traveled 4,000 kilometers in 5 days and arrived in Moscow. My arrival caused a sensation at the Embassy.

### Two Dinners in Moscow in 1946

I had not seen the capital in six years. There was little change, since it had been spared by air raids. There had been no construction work during the war, with the exception of the subway with its gorgeous stations and lavish use of marble. There were the same queues in front of stores, especially the high priced food stores selling so-called "commercial" bread and sugar without ration cards.

There were large numbers of soldiers of every branch of service, dressed in new uniforms with rich gold epaulets. People on the main thoroughfares were well dressed in imported clothes of excellent cut and material. Whereas watches had been a rarity before the war, now they glistened on the wrists of many men and women. Now one could see elegant shoes and hats instead of berets. With more private cars, there was almost an air of luxury. However, in the workers' sections, work clothing predominated.

Even before the war it had been difficult to find a room. By now the population had increased to over 7 million, an increase of 2 million. Many families had only one room and shared the kitchen with all the other tenants. When the husband and wife both work, life is even more complicated. The husband comes home, but his wife has to stand in line in front of some store. Days of rest are devoted to laundering. In the summer, one has to raise vegetables in the garden. Such living conditions do not foster cleanliness. Consequently, I have been unable to find a room without bedbugs. The subway swarmed with fleas.

## CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

During my stay in Moscow, I was invited to the homes of many Russians. They could not understand why Frenchmen, who were friends and allies, were kept in prison camps. They always took great care to caution me that everything would be in strict confidence and I had nothing to fear. However, it seems that my hosts were mainly thinking of themselves and did not care to have anyone know that they were entertaining foreigners. Two such invitations give a typical illustration of Soviet life in that year.

### At the Home of a Worker

"Let's have a glass of tea." This is just an expression. Whisky is served, and large or small, the glass is emptied in one gulp. The conversation pops up and one begins to talk about the hard times. Prices are too high and wages are too low. Voices are low; this is criticism in a sense, and the walls have ears.

There are three of us at the table. The host, a big fellow, is a fitter at a factory, who has just been demobilized. His wife is a pretty Ukrainian with long black braids. She is wearing a beautiful embroidered blouse in my honor. They have a room of about 12 square meters' floor space. There is an old wooden bed with springs poking out of the mattress, a wardrobe, a small table, and three broken chairs. The mother of the host is sitting on the bed. Formerly, she owned the whole house. The government confiscated the house and left her one room for herself, her son, and daughter-in-law. Now seven other families are living in the house. There are remnants of old wallpaper on the wall, decorated with crushed bedbugs. Groceries and the ever-present spirit lamp are in the hallway. The elderly woman sleeps in the hallway in the summer or in the room in the winter, either on the floor or on three chairs pushed together.

"Grandma, have a glass with us," says the host. After some coaxing she drinks her whiskey and returns to the bed looking a little less unhappy. "We are fortunate to have mother. My wife is a

## CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

salesclerk in a food store and it would be impossible for her to stand in line. If it were not for grandma, we would have nothing to eat." The old lady becomes talkative about events in her life and takes out some old photographs from the trunk. She must have risked a lot to hide these souvenirs. Suddenly she becomes silent, hides everything, and crosses herself surreptitiously. "Pay no attention to her. Sometimes you can't get a word out of her," says the son.

My host begins to talk. He saw much during the war. Life in other countries seems to be easier than in Russia. His wife listens, both transported and sad. Suddenly my host asks me if I have an exit passport. When I nod, he cries: "Then why don't you leave?"

Many more highly cultured people had asked me that question. This time I was being asked by a simple "child of the October Revolution," who was still dazzled by everything that he had been able to see of European life. It was about this life that he wanted to chat with me. He had gone to the expense of a reception for the sake of this conversation. I was the only one he could talk to. Taking me to the subway, his parting words were: "Maybe I talked too much, but I trust you."

### At the Home of an Officer

A few days later, an officer of the occupation forces in Berlin invited me to his home. He was on furlough and was thinking of taking his wife back with him. He was no acquaintance of mine and I would not have gone except for the fact that I had known his wife's sister and had brought her news about a cousin who had been deported. I hesitated for a long time. It would not be safe to talk about my experiences on the steppes of Karaganda in front of an officer, and I knew I was being spied on at every step. So as not to become doped with whiskey, before starting out I drank a half liter of sunflower oil, and took a roundabout route on the subway.

## CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

The table was set when I arrived and we immediately sat down. The room was poorly furnished. On the walls were portraits of Molotov and Stalin and on the shelves were the indispensable furnishings of every Soviet home - the complete works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin, attractively bound. The purchase of these editions is compulsory, but the price is low. The room had formerly been large, but was now partitioned off to form a kitchen and foyer. My host was wearing all his decorations and was very proud of his three stars. He had been working in a kolkhose when war broke out and entered the army as a plain soldier. Now he was a sergeant.

"I am thinking of taking my wife by plane," he says. "It is faster and safer. On the trains one encounters suboteurs, partisans, and shooting. The Germans do not want to understand that we liberated them from Hitler. They do not like us, and where I am stationed, it is not safe to go out evenings. Of course, we are careful. We have no pity for the bandits who ruin d our dear country. Only, it is hard to find the criminals because they all stick together. We have to terrorize them so that they will not only be afraid to shoot at us but even to think about it. It is better to arrest 999 innocent ones than to leave one future murderer free."

The wife is a buxom country girl from a kolkhose. She is wearing a kimono of rayon "made in Germany," fastened at the neck with a huge brooch of old silver studded with multi-colored cabochon stones, probably from Germany. "Aren't you afraid to go to Germany?" I ask her. Her sister replies: "That's nothing to what she has seen. She was at the front and met her husband there. She was a member of the Communist Youth and took active part in battles. She has been decorated."

The young housewife is not wearing her decorations, only her brooch and earrings. "We are not afraid of the Germans," she says. "We have everything here, but my husband says that it is better there because we have a favorable rate of exchange and can buy many things

## CONFIDENTIAL

**CONFIDENTIAL**

which we do not have here. The Germans have hidden a lot, but in the end they will have to sell. My sister will stay and take care of the house and I will send her presents."

My host brought out a second bottle of whiskey. After that I do not remember whether or not we talked about the object of my visit - news of the deported cousin. Precious whiskey; it had been prohibited during the revolution, but was legalized before the war because the state needed the revenue.

**Wages**

After having worked for 20 years in Russian industry, and having been interned for 5 years in Siberia, although I was an alien I thought I could be permitted to stay in Moscow. When I learned that I could only live in the provinces, under strict surveillance, I applied for an exit visa and left 3 November 1946 for France. My 2-month stay at the capital enabled me to renew my acquaintance with normal Soviet life.

The Soviets have compulsory education. Children must attend at least the 7 grades of primary school. After that they have the opportunity of attending trade schools where they become skilled workers. Students receive food and clothing, and after graduation are sent to the factories. There are also 10-year schools, from which the best students receive scholarships to more advanced schools. These are classified according to numerous specialized departments of engineering corresponding to the branches of industry.

From earliest youth, the majority of the children belong to the organization of "Children of the October Revolution." Later they join the "Red Pioneers," then "Communist Youth." When they become of age, they become members of the party. It is customary to pass through the progressive stages, as it is very difficult at present to obtain membership in the party directly. One may attend meetings for

**CONFIDENTIAL**

## CONFIDENTIAL

many years as sympathizer, excluding secret meetings. When one is well known, he may be accepted as a candidate and must then start a long course of study of the Marxist classics. Although the numerous purges have thinned the ranks and left only those who are outwardly faithful, this does not mean that members ignore material considerations. Being deprived of membership often means the loss of privileges and the loss of a position.

In 1925 when I worked the Shchotovo plants as director of the electrical and mechanical division, it was suggested that I join the party. I filled out all the forms, but it was also necessary to have three sponsors who had been party members for over 5 years. I was able to get only two sponsors, so I left the place without joining the party and have never applied for membership since.

### Wages and Prices

When the worker's budget is compared with his wages, it is difficult to understand how the worker can live. He must pay an income tax and a tax for cultural benefits. At least a tenth of his earnings are deducted for state bonds, to which he must subscribe. He must pay for rent, lighting, fuel, water, and sewage disposal. The trade union takes 1 percent of the wages, and the party 3 percent; then there is group insurance. If he lives some distance from the plant, he must pay trolley fares.

Yet, everyone is dressed and lives somehow. Family life helps; the head of the family is seldom the only wage-earner. Usually, the wife and children augment the family income. Then, there are premiums. The standard of living is low. Basic food requirements consist of bread, soup, and cereal. Everyone gets along without meat, butter, and eggs. It must be remembered that every laborer and office worker spends his free time in his vegetable garden outside the city. To encourage this, the government issues cheap railroad tickets, and the family raises its own potatoes, cabbage, carrots, beets, and

## CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

cucumbers. This is additional work, but everyone then feels he is somewhat of a landowner, and even the citizens of the USSR like that.

### Comparative Earnings

Health services are well organized. Everyone can go to the clinic and receive free treatment. Patients with small incomes may even get medicine free. A doctor may work in several clinics, provided he takes care of the required number of patients daily. The first clinic pays him 500 to 600 rubles monthly; successive clinics pay according to the number of patients examined. He may also practice in institutions for children. On an average, a doctor can earn 1,800-2,000 rubles monthly. Usually, he is not permitted to have any private practice, except with the payment of very high taxes.

In other professions it is also possible to have employment in more than one place. I personally often had three sources of income.

### Earnings and Cost of Living

A few instances are given as follows:

<u>Trade</u>	<u>Monthly pay - in rubles</u>
Domestic	180
Unskilled laborer	250
Office worker	400 - 600
Skilled worker - specialist	600 - 750
Group foreman	600 - 800
Foreman	800-1,000
Engineer	600-1,000
Draughtsman	2,000-2,500
Chief director and technical director	1,800-2,200

Premiums are additional and proportionate to salaries. Some factories have a sliding scale and a good worker can triple his basic pay. The director also gets extra pay when the factory exceeds its norm.

## CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

In white collar work, pay is greatly diversified so that one cannot make generalizations. Writers do not publish their own books but are paid by the government. Artists get the highest pay. I knew an opera singer who received 6,000 rubles monthly, and she was not a star of the first magnitude.

The following are prices which I had to pay in the free market, since I had no ration card: 2 kilograms black bread, 40 rubles; 150 grams white bread, 15 rubles; milk, 20 rubles per liter; meat, 70-100 rubles per kilogram; eggs, 5-7 rubles each; butter, 200-220 rubles per kilogram.

### Conclusions on Returning to France

The Russians are transforming their country and increasing their production potential at the cost of great sacrifices, such as the renunciation of all personal freedom and doing without the most elementary comforts. Thanks to the discipline of the dictatorship, the production potential increases while the cost of the inexhaustible manpower drops. The number of technicians is also growing. Undoubtedly, before long, Russia will satisfy her immense domestic needs and will be free from the economic exigencies that heretofore have hampered the political action of its leadership. What will Russia undertake then? That is the problem which the whole world faces anxiously.

### Progress in Productivity

When I returned to Moscow after five years' internment in Siberia, cut off from Soviet life, I was able to get a perspective of Russian development. Up to 1930, wages were almost the same for managers and workers. This uniformity was in line with the Communist ideal but did not offer an incentive to increase productivity. About that time some of the trusts began to introduce a sliding scale of wages and to increase substantially the remuneration of managers and engineers.

## CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

The increase in productivity was marked, but the real psychological shock came with the Stakhanovist movement. About 1935, Stakhanov, a miner, set individual records of productivity, and Stalin, whose position was assured by that time, took him as a model and made him the apostle of labor. With this example, blown up with furious propaganda, production made further progress. Papan kept pace with the new records and some workers earned ten times as much as others. The outstanding workers also had the privilege of shopping at Stakhanovite stores, which offered commodities not obtainable elsewhere. However, the top political leaders were not in complete agreement among themselves. This was the period of mass arrests after the assassination of Kirov, Stalin's right hand man. The reign of terror that followed lowered the morale of the workers and for two years production did not increase.

### Socialist Incentives

In 1937, the government introduced on a large scale the remarkable system known as the "socialist incentive payment plan." This is how it works. A certain team of workers discusses the work quotas and decides to increase them. For instance, if the norm is 100 units a day, the team registers a pledge with the trade union to produce 110 units a day, thereby lowering the costs of production while maintaining the same quality and keeping the machines in good order. Other teams are called on to do the same, and someone can always be induced to raise his hand. Another group agrees to produce 120 units. The competition starts and the trade union judges the quality of the product. The names of the winners appear on red tablets and the names of those who failed appear on black tablets.

With the introduction of the incentive system, sabotage ceased to exist. The saboteurs had been remnants of dissatisfied kulaks who had been forced to work after their property had been confiscated. Sabotage on a large scale had also been instigated by highly placed

## CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

Communists which did not approve of Stalin's methods. However, this class disappeared after the Moscow show trials and the confessions obtained thereby.

Starting with 1938, although the population was still skeptical, production began to increase, and took on gigantic proportions after the transfer of heavy industry to the Urals. Stimulated by mass propaganda, patriotism reached its highest peak during the war. The soldier exhibited endurance and courage rarely equaled in history. The factory worker was equally valiant in enduring every burden and hardship. The work day was lengthened to 10 hours. For miners, to cite an example, this meant 11-12 hours underground. Taxes increased by 100 percent for those who were not fit for military service, by 200 percent for those who were fit but remained at their jobs, and by 300 percent for single men. Days of rest were reduced to 3 per month and vacations were entirely abolished. The state was supposed to pay for the lost days of rest and vacations after the war, but at a vast majority of the workers' meetings, the workers agreed to give up any claims.

### Why I Left Russia

During my stay in Moscow I was able to verify to what extent official precepts are followed.

The soldiers who return from the west must forget everything that they have seen and must restrain themselves from making any comparisons or comments. This is easily done because of the deep impregnation resulting from 30 years of regimentation and fear of the consequences which befall the unruly. The trap is sprung; the iron curtain falls. As a rule, more care is taken to prevent penetration of the curtain from the inside out than the reverse.

Before leaving for Moscow, I received documents to authorize my stay in Moscow. In spite of my internment and the loss of my entire wealth, I had intended to remain in Russia in the belief that the appropriate ministry would give me a position commensurate with my qualifications.

## CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

I rented a room in a private home. After 5 days, my landlady, a Soviet citizen, told me secretly that NKVD agents were inquiring about me day and night and that she feared for her safety for having rented a room to a foreigner. I had to seek shelter elsewhere.

After some delay, on 31 October 1946, the bureau of visas and alien registration informed me that I had permission to stay in the country provided that I left Moscow in 3 days. That was tantamount to being forced to accept any kind of employment, even that of a common laborer. I could not accept such injustice after so many years of work and requested an exit visa.

### My Return to France

I arrived in Paris by plane on 4 November after 39 years' absence. I find a country that is as unfamiliar to me as the moon. What strikes me most is the complete freedom of expression and easy living conditions, although many people complain about shortages.

I have made contacts with the French working class. I have been astounded by the relative comfort of the dwellings, and the quality and variety of food and clothing. The Soviet worker cannot even dream of such a standard of living.

While I lived in Russia, I learned to accept the limitations and police supervision as a matter of course. It was several weeks before I could bring myself to speak without fear.

After two months' stay in Paris, I feel that comparisons between the Soviet and French regimes are unfavorable to the Soviets from the standpoint of living conditions and favorable from the standpoint of production. If by some unfortunate course of events the French proletariat should be introduced to the discipline and work requirements of a Communist state, it would find itself in no position to resist.

The Soviet paradise which I left is in the land of promises. One says to the Russians: "You are suffering for the happiness of future generations." The prospect is too distant to satisfy the French worker.

## CONFIDENTIAL